702 military leader (Asan) appointed by the chief.
[857] Each desam had its gymnasium (kalari) into which
all retainer-Nayar boys were inducted at the age
of seven. Their training in gymnastics and
swordsmanship lasted nine years, after which
they received their arms at the hand of the king
701 and were accorded the title of Nayar. After this
age every able-bodied Nayar man was perpetually
in military training until he reached the age of
retirement or until he was obliged to succeed to
the headship of his matrilineal property-group
[541] and retire to manage its lands. In peacetime,
mock fights were organized between Nayars of
adjacent villages or of adjacent nads, and joust-
ing was conducted at the court for the entertain-
726 ment of the royal family. In war, the Nayars
[714] fought naked: their arms were the sword, bow,
lance and the bow and arrow, though gunpowder
was also used, at least by the more important
Rajas. Battles between enemy kingdoms appear
to have been stylized. Not more than 10,000
men were commonly brought into the field at one
time, and severe loss of life was prevented by
the employment of Nambudiri emissaries who, if
fighting became intense, entered the battle field
and arbitrated between its leaders. [32] If how-
ever the king or a chief were slain, his subjects
must fight to the death until their honour was
avenged by the slaughter of a corresponding
leader on the enemy side. The aim of such
721 battles appears to have been solely to gain con-
trol over the military power of nads of adjacent
kingdoms, together with certain payments of
tribute by conquered chieftains, and also to gain

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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Men and women who have taken part in the festival are considered to have undergone spiritual purification each in his or her own caste, and to have marked their position in it as well as in the social scale.

Beyond noting that the weirdness of the human tumult busy in its religious effusion is on the last night enhanced by fireworks, mere description of the scene of the festival will not be attempted, and such charming adjuncts of it as the gallery of pretty Nâyar women looking on from the garden fence at the seething procession in the lane below must be left to the imagination for the present, while we must be content with such accuracy as we may attain on all points: neither fancy nor beauty shall allure us from the dull path of precision, for the mere features of the ceremonial are one real concern.

It will have been noticed that the Nambûtiris hold aloof from the festival: they purify the temple before and after, but no more.

The importance attached to the various offices of those who are attached to the temple by however slender a thread, was illustrated by a rather amusing squabble between two of the Mukkuvans (fishermen), an uncle and nephew, as to which of them should receive the silver umbrella from the temple and bear it to the house of the goldsmith to be repaired. How the squabble arose, how indeed there could have arisen a squabble on such a point as seniority between an uncle and a nephew amongst Mukkuvans, whose descent is reckoned from father to son, I know not, but during the festival one of them made a rapid journey to the Zamorin (about 50 miles distant), paid some fees and established himself as the senior who had the right to carry the umbrella. There are points of resemblance between this festival and the village festival of Southern India where the buffalo "devoted" to the goddess of the village is sacrificed, where there is the slaughter of the lamb by the strong teeth of a man, the dressing up in leaves, the man naked and blindfolded going round outside the village while cooked rice and blood are scattered wide, the blindfolded man falling senseless before the goddess at the end of it.*

There are many festivals in Malabar description of which would be very interesting, but information in detail is wanting in my notes, so I must perforce rest content with what has been related of the festival at the

* Described at length by me in the "Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay" some eight years ago.

He had criminal and civil jurisdiction and the right to claim military service from the Nāyars under him. The *Nadu Vazhis* kept a local force varying between five hundred and one thousand men, which they were obliged to put into the field at the command of their Rajah. The *Nadu Vazhis* were kept under control by the Rajah when he was able to do so. But in any case they were bound to fight for him. Below these *Nadu Vazhis* were *Desa Vazhis* (lords of the Manor). They had the right of keeping a *Kalari* or a military academy. In each village there was one *Desa Vazhi* (sometimes more), who was called master (*Asān*) by the Nāyars. He was their military preceptor in peace time and their leader in war time.

The principal business of the *Desa Vazhi* was to train the young men of *Desa* in his *Kalari*. All Nāyar boys after twelve were supposed to attend the *Kalari* and learn boxing, fencing, sword play, military formation, and the ordinary rules of warfare. For such training the *Desa Vazhi* was not paid. After eighteen the boys were not supposed to attend the *Kalari*, but were required to be ready to start for war at a day's notice.

The *Kalaris* are still in existence. Even now the Nāyar young men who do not go to English schools get some sort of a training with imitation swords and shields, because swords are prohibited by the Arms Act. In certain families one male member has to be proficient in this art so as to be able to teach the others. The *Kalaris*, though now visited by people only for the extreme beauty of their architecture, are still used by the Nāyars of the *Desas* as places of worship.

On the festival days in the village temple the Nāyars, who have been thus trained, even now hold a review in martial array (*vila*). In Trivandrum, which is the capital of the Maharajah of Travancore, this feature is very prominent. In other places there are still *Patayanis* (*Pata*=war, *ani*=to get ready). All the Nāyars of the surrounding districts assemble, and the ceremonies which in former days stood for military manœuvres are held with great enthusiasm.

The centre of all the martial and, consequently, of the social life of the Nāyars is, therefore, the *Desa*. In each village there is a temple owned by the community. The temple is generally self-supporting, and occasionally very rich. The temple authorities are appointed by the village. The power is generally vested in the *Pramanis*, or the chief men. In each village there are certain families who have the right of being consulted in all matters connected with it. The head of these *Pramanis* is the Lord of the Manor.

In describing the organization of the village, it is better to take one practical example which is typical. Kavalam is such a village. I shall, therefore, confine myself to the description of the organization of that village.

The village is supposed to consist of one hundred and fifty houses. This is the traditional number, but at least fifty of these have emigrated. But though they live in other parts of the country they are still considered to belong to this organization. In all the ceremonies that require the sanction of the village the emigrant,

[i.e., The Nadu Vazhi -- Analyst]

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
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only training was the training of the memory, and the learned pedagogue never bestowed a thought on cultivating the thinking powers or the originality of his pupils. But this type of school and school-master is fast disappearing under the modern regime of elementary schools.

Next in importance to the school-master is the Kaniyan, an indispensable factor in the affairs and ceremonies of the village.[1]

Then come the artisan classes whose services are necessary in the construction of houses, and the making of implements of agriculture. They were paid for their work either in kind or in coin.

The other men of importance in the village economic life were the physician, the village washerman, and the village barber. The village physician was a man of parts; for, not only did he tend the sick and the ailing, but also cast out devils from persons possessed, and with the aid of well prepared charms guarded them from the effects of the evil eye. The village washermen were of the Veluthédan and the Mannán caste. The services of the former were always requisitioned when people wished to become free from pollution, an act the omission of which leads to outcasting.

The village barber is another indispensable factor in the village ceremony and is employed for the shaving before all ceremonies. His privileges cannot be encroached upon by his own caste-men from other villages.

The village organisation above described is preserved to a certain extent even now and most probably the Kaniyan's profession will survive all other relics of Hindu institutions, as his services are considered to be of essential importance in matters of every day life.

Village pastimes.

The ordinary games pursued by the young men of the village are the foot-ball matches, *Attakalam*, *Kayyámkali*, and *Kaikottikkali* (a favourite circular dance of the women), *Uzhinjúl* and others, while cards and chess are common enough on festive occasions. Cock-fighting is an interesting pastime among the lower classes.

The most important of the village pastimes are the dramatic performances, a description of which is given in the following pages. The drama in Malabar sprang into being in

1. Vide my account of the Kaniyans, Vol. I, Chap. XI, pages 190-93.

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

is supremely secret. Equally so is that which follows. The carcass of one goat will be taken out of the temple by the northern door to the north side of the temple, and from this place one of the temple servants, who is blindfolded, drags it three times round the temple, the Mūssads following closely, repeating their mantrams, the drummer in front beating his drum softly with his fingers. The drummer dare not look behind him, and does not know what is being done. After the third round, the drummer and the temple servant go away, and the three Mūssads cook some of the flesh of the goats and one or two of the cocks (or a part of one) with rice. This rice, when cooked, is taken to the kāvu (grove) to the north of the temple, and there the Mūssads again ply their mantrams. As each mantram is ended, a handful of saffron (turmeric) powder is flung on the rice, and all the time the drummer, who by this time has returned, keeps up an obligato pianissimo with his drum, using his fingers. He faces the north, and the priests face the south. Presently the priests run (not walk) once round the temple, carrying the cooked rice, and scattering it wide as they go, repeating mantrams. They enter the temple, and remain within until daybreak. No one can leave the temple until morning comes. Before daybreak, the temple is thoroughly swept and cleaned, and then the Mūssads go out, and the five Nambūtiris again enter before sunrise, and perform the ordinary worship thrice in the day, for this day only. The next morning, the Mūssad priests return and resume their duties. Beyond noting that the weirdness of the human tumult, busy in its religious effusion, is on the last night enhanced by fireworks, mere description of the scene of the festival will not be attempted, and such charming adjuncts of it as the gallery of pretty Nāyar women looking on from the